

# VESTNIK



Fund for Assistance to the  
Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia  
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*The mission of the Fund for Assistance is to support the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, specifically, the moral-spiritual education of youth, aid to its clergy and distribution of emergency relief to its missions.*



## Disaster in Paradise... Prevented by Your Generosity

**Though a tourist paradise, Bali is an expensive place to live in. Especially when there is no health insurance, and if you don't pay up front, you cannot get medical treatment. Even when your life is at risk...**



Fr. Alexander Kobesi is well known to you all. His stirring search for a church building on Bali, as well as the faith of his parishioners, inspired you to provide sufficient funds for our mission in Bali to begin regular services. With great enthusiasm, both Fr. Alexander and his parishioners forged ahead in their eagerness to worship God and spread the Gospel of Christ.

As an Orthodox Christian, you know that no such good deed goes without a challenge from the forces of darkness. You all have seen how your own priests' families are the first to bear the brunt of demonic attacks and temptations. Bali's only Orthodox priest was no exception.

Last April, Fr. Alexander's sixteen-year-old daughter Mary Grace got into an accident on her moped. She hit her face and head on the pavement, breaking teeth and causing serious bruising. It was immediately obvious that she needed medical treatment, but her father couldn't afford it. To make matters worse, in Bali, a doctor will not treat you unless you pay in advance!

Somehow Fr. Alexander was able to scrounge enough money from friends to get her to a doctor. But once there, he received frightening news:

**"Mary Grace was in urgent need of a CT scan to check for any kind of post traumatic bleeding on her brain, which is a life threatening situation, and can be treated only if detected early to save her young life."**

The cost for a CT scan was prohibitive for the young Orthodox mission. So the FFA immediately put out an appeal.



Your generosity, as always, overwhelmed us. You ensured that Mary Grace got to a doctor in time.

**"I convey to you about Mary Grace's health development. CT Scan has been run, doctors didn't find bleeding in her brain, but the brain trauma still need to be treated until healed entirely."**

Then, you went above and beyond the minimum. Not only did you cover the required \$450.00 for Mary Grace's treatment, but, in total, you contributed over \$7,000.00, all of which went to the daily needs of the mission and Mary Grace's continued treatment. Now, in addition to the extended treatment for her brain trauma, you made it possible for Mary Grace to have her two broken teeth fixed.

And, more importantly, you gave comfort to a priest who tirelessly works to provide comfort for others, leaving nothing for himself.

The most recent news from Fr. Alexander is as follows:

**"With all humility we extend our gratitude to you all for the news that really strengthens us. This is a miracle of God. God is love; in fact God has shown love and kindness through you. In a short time, you raised so many funds! Last night our family prayed and thanked God and remembered your kindness and the benefactors."**

We hope you will continue to remember this worthy family as they continue to spread the light of the Truth in a land darkened by radical Islam and materialism.



## You have equipped a priest to become a skilled spiritual warrior! Thank you!



**T**hanks to your amazing generosity, a ROCOR priest will now receive a full scholarship (\$10,000) at the Holy Trinity Seminary for the Master's of Divinity Program. This will be known as the Prince Vladimir Galitzine scholarship in honor of one of the FFA's most prominent leaders.

**H**aving a highly educated priest is a huge win for our whole Church - thanks to YOU! Check out the thank-you video on our YouTube and Facebook channels - made especially for you by Holy Trinity Seminary for helping raise these funds!

## Your help for the people of Kosovo - about to be delivered!

**I** wrote to you during Great Lent asking to support our brothers and sisters in Kosovo who suffer daily persecution for their Orthodox Faith from radical Muslims. They are mostly small farmers who depend on their land for survival. I wrote in the hopes of raising \$30,000 to help them for Pascha.

**U**nfortunately, we weren't able to collect this much as soon as we had hoped. But I have good news: although later than planned, with your generous help we have collected over \$11,000. The money was on the way to Kosovo while this issue was being prepared. I will get back to you with reports and pictures in the next issue!

**T**hank you so much for caring for our suffering Orthodox brothers and sisters in the Serbian Church!



## From your generous hands... to God's ears. Literally!

**Not only are our Haitian brothers and sisters becoming financially stable, but they're parlaying their success into worship. Your names are being offered at the altar on prosphoras made possible by your own generosity!**



**Can you imagine? Ten years without proper prosphora! And now, through your continued aid and involvement in Haiti, your own names will be offered on the altar of the Lord during Liturgy.**

Last year, I wrote to you of the wonderful success of a special seminar, funded by you, intended to provide impoverished Haitians with practical skills, including multimedia and computer training, that they can use to support themselves for the long term. It included a special training session on testifying the Faith through multimedia, encouraging people to express, as the organizer of the event said,

“Beyond suffering, courage and love for the Church. Beyond disappointment, determination and love for family..”

Since then, you have empowered Fr. Jules and Matushka Michaella to prepare liturgical bread every Saturday for the Divine Sunday Liturgy at Our Lady of the Nativity Parish, and once a month at the Saints Peter and Paul parish.

Although this may seem not as glamorous as technical courses in multimedia preparation, the reality is somewhat more complicated. As Reader Martin wrote in an email,

“It had been more than ten years since we had lost this knowledge within the Mission.”

“We are happy that, thanks to the FFA



and its generous donors, whom we thank, training can take place for the faithful Orthodox of Haiti,” Reader Martin continues,

“We hope that other such training will continue to take place and that the members of the Mission will acquire other practical knowledge.”

As Reader Martin suggested, there is still much to be done. And I hope you will not fail to continue supporting our brothers and sisters. As Matushka Michaela soberly reminds us:

“There were a few times we did not prepare prosphora because we had no gas. We still have a hard life, and sometimes we have no money to buy gas.”

What Matushka did not say is that she rarely uses her oven for her own cooking – because it’s just way too expensive.

So as we rejoice in our common cup of Holy Communion at the Liturgy, we hope that you will not forget Haiti, which continues to rise like a phoenix from the ashes of continual and devastating natural disasters. We at FFA, and all our brothers and sisters in Haiti, join voices to thank you for your help and your prayers!

The most recent news from the mission is that everyone is alive after the latest earthquake, but are experiencing even greater daily difficulties than previously. Please continue to support and pray for our brothers and sisters in Haiti!



During this training, the participants not only had courses on multimedia communication, work and liturgical practice, but also something so practical, so basic, that we sometimes forget that not everyone knows how to do it. It was a training course with Liturgist Alexander Andreev in how to bake liturgical bread.



## Spring break 2018: a pilgrimage instead of a trip to the beach!

**If you want to see just how effective your donations are, look no further. Thanks to supportive people like you, young ROCOR adults choose to spend their spring break not on a beach, but working and praying.**

Last May, ten ROCOR kids travelled together with Archpriest Andrei Sommer to Belarus with the purpose of accompanying the relics of St New Martyrs Elizabeth and Barbara to the St Elizabeth Convent in Minsk. At the convent, the kids went to divine services, made connections with locals, helped out in the convent's home for the elderly and a home for disabled children.

Take a look at what they wrote after experiencing this amazing pilgrimage – which would never have been possible without you:

“This trip was a truly profound experience for all of our youth, and we certainly left an impact in the Orthodox communities in the nation of Belarus.

The youth's visit to Minsk was highlighted by Sunday's Orthodox youth symposium, taking place at the Theological Academy of Minsk. Ten Orthodox youth from America presented to over a hundred Belarusian youth on the topic of living a Russian Orthodox life in America.

We read aloud prepared essays and showed photographs documenting our lives, answering their questions for over

two hours. Their questions ranged from how we grew up Orthodox in a secular society, to what our personal Russian reading lists were, to how we interacted with non-Orthodox American peers. They were all extremely interested in how youth from America can live traditional Orthodox lifestyles...

I met with two Belarusian women, who confessed to me that they had held rather negative views about American culture before our symposium, but were truly touched by our fervent Orthodox lives, admitting they had learned a lot from us.

Wherever we went, we were met with extreme gratitude for our presence. We conversed with nuns and members of clergy of this convent about our lives in America, about life at the convent, and about Belarus. The convent was visited by tens of thousands of people over the course of just three days who traveled from across the country to venerate the relics of Saint Elizabeth. These travelers visited throughout the day and late into the evening; buses of people arrived into the early hours of the morning each night, full of Orthodox believers wishing to see the relics in the convent. The sheer number of people that the presence of the





**“There were many questions from the crowd that made me think a lot about my future; such as “How are you going to raise your kids?” and “Would you ever move to Russia?”. It was very cool to find out how interested people were in our Orthodox Christian lives in a country that lost many of those traditional values” – Tatiana Zakharov**

relics was able to summon was astounding to all of us.

**T**his trip was certainly a blessing for all of us and we eagerly await our next chance to travel abroad in the name of Orthodoxy.”  
- Alexei Ohotin

**“I**t was an amazing spiritual experience. I won’t forget the orphanage for mentally disabled children and the home for the elderly. They were treated at the homes with care and respect. Overall, it was an amazing pilgrimage and everything went fantastic.

It strengthened my sense of Russian Orthodox identity.” - Alex Boldewskul

**“I** am so grateful to have had this unique experience. Despite it being so short it will definitely have a lasting impact on my life.”  
- Masha Healy

**“F**or us American youth, this was not only spiritually inspiring; it served as a great reminder of the blessings we have in our own churches. Our experience of life in a Russian-speaking, Orthodox nation is one we will never forget.” – Kyrill Kavetsky

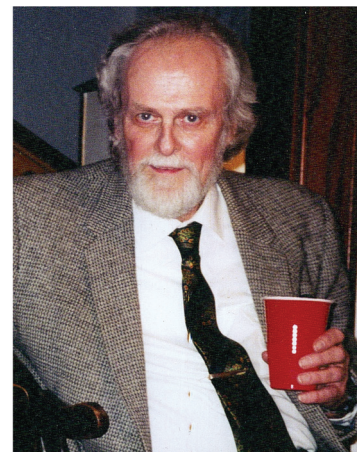
## Patrick's Will says a lot about him. What does yours say about you?

We are saddened by the loss of our friend Patrick (William) Brien, who died on February 13, 2017 in Somerville, New Jersey. Patrick was a founding member, generous benefactor, and active parishioner of St. Elizabeth the New Martyr Orthodox Church in Rocky Hill, New Jersey. A very humble and rigorously honest man, he demanded a great deal from himself, first, and then prayed for the rest of the world and everything surrounding him.

As a dedicated schoolteacher for many years, he was a very original and independent person, who made history a central part of his life. Over the course of years, this brought him step-by-step to the Church, and in particular, to a deep

appreciation of the Russian Orthodox faith.

**And so, Patrick's recent bequest to the Fund for Assistance will actually help to shape history.**



It is thanks to remarkable persons such as Patrick that the Fund for Assistance is able to continue its important work—vitaly helping hundreds of our church members, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and making us stronger year by year.

Order your free bequest guide today to see how easy it is to leave a gift that will strengthen your Church for generations to come.

**Call us at 917-817-2925 or email [alena@ffarocor.org](mailto:alena@ffarocor.org)**

The Fund for Assistance to ROCOR is turning 60 years old – all thanks to people like you! You and other amazing people have supported our Church through the Fund for Assistance since 1959. To celebrate this, we are planning to release a short video some time next year about how FFA donors (you!) have helped our Church time and again.

If you would like to be interviewed to share your FFA story, if you have archival photos or documents, please call Alena Plavsic's direct line (917)817-2925 or email [alena@ffarocor.org](mailto:alena@ffarocor.org).

### Our Promise

*Your money – your decision: 100% of all donations directly fund the cause indicated by the donor. Stay updated on how your kindness supports the Church you love: subscribe to our email newsletter on our website:*

*[fundforassistance.org](http://fundforassistance.org)*



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